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## BEHIND THE PURPLE STAMP

3 NETWORK: NBC

DATE: December 1, 1945

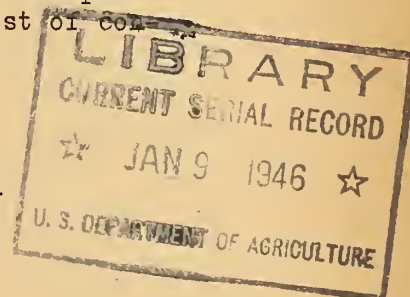
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1. SOUND: CASH REGISTER RINGS TWICE...MONEY IN TILL
2. JOHN: It's CONSUMER TIME!
3. SOUND: CASH REGISTER....CLOSE DRAWER
4. ANNCR: During the next fifteen minutes, the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations make their facilities available as a public service for the presentation of CONSUMER TIME by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.
5. FREYMAN: You know, Johnny...last week was pretty exciting for home-makers all over the country. I mean, of course, the announcement that meat rationing was over.
6. JOHN: Yes indeed it was, Mrs. Freyman. And all this talk about "meat-isn't-it-wonderful"...reminded us that our CONSUMER TIME listeners might like to hear the story of how meat is Federally inspected...
7. FREYMAN: In other words...the story behind the purple stamp you find on your meat...the stamp that says "U. S. Inspected and Passed."
8. JOHN: So that's what we're going to hear about today.
9. FREYMAN: Now...say you're a homemaker...indulging yourself to a trip to the butcher shop. To buy this and that, of course....





10. JOHN: But also to gaze happily at the things you can buy simply if you want to. The display of chops or liver...or hamburger...it's sort of like going to the art gallery.
11. FREYMAN: Yes...and you like to linger for a moment longer, to have a pleasant word or two with the butcher. Any little excuse will do...and you lean on the counter, looking at the display of meat through the glass and you say...
12. WOMAN: Well now...you know there's been something I've been meaning to ask you for some time, Mr. Brown.
13. BROWN: And what would that be, Mrs. Jones?
14. WOMAN: Just what does that purple stamp mean that I find on my meat. I mean I know it means it's inspected, but who inspects it...and what does it really stand for?
15. BROWN: Now Mrs. Jones don't get me started on any topic like that ...not if you have to leave right away...
16. WOMAN: (OFFHAND) Oh...I've got plenty of time. And it's so nice to stand here gazing around at the meat.
17. BROWN: Well...being as it's not my busy time of day...
18. WOMAN: See here...it says "U. S. Inspected and Passed"...it's not so hard to read that little stamp. I guess I just never read it before. What does that other writing say, Mr. Brown?
19. BROWN: This round stamp is the Inspected stamp. The other marking where it says "U.S. Good, U.S. Good, U.S. Good," all down the side of the meat...is the grade...one's inspection...the other's grade.
20. WOMAN: There's a difference?
21. BROWN: Oh sure. The inspection stamp means that the meat is from healthy animals, and that it was prepared in clean surroundings...in other words that the meat is pure and wholesome.





22. WOMAN: Oh, I see...
23. BROWN: Now graders are different people from inspectors. Their job is to look the meat over and decide whether it's choice quality...you know, something that would make a thick, tender, juicy steak...or good quality, which is very good indeed...but not the absolute best...or maybe utility grade...which might be a little tougher and so on. They have four grades altogether. I'll tell you about 'em a little later.
24. WOMAN: Well fine...
25. BROWN: But you were asking me about this Inspection stamp.
26. WOMAN: Yes, you told me. You said that it meant the meat was healthy and the plant was clean.
27. BROWN: But did you ever stop to think just what a job that is? I mean, you consider one of the big meat packing houses in Chicago...with hundreds of thousands of steaks and chops and hams and sausages rolling through through there every day. Can you imagine inspectors having to see that every last hot dog is pure and clean and okay?
28. WOMAN: Say, I never thought of it quite that way.
29. BROWN: It's a whale of a job, Mrs. Jones.
30. WOMAN: I'll just bet it is.
31. BROWN: Now you take, like in the beginning. The inspector has to go out to the stockyards where the animals are all milling around...and he sort of chases them around the place to see that they're all fit and healthy.
32. WOMAN: He gets right in the pen with them?
33. BROWN: Oh certainly he does. And if any of them don't seem quite up to snuff...sort of lag behind and act as though there's something the matter with 'em...the inspector puts a tag in their ear that says U. S. Suspect.

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34. WOMAN: Oh, I see...
35. BROWN: And then the next fellows keep an eye on that particular beast.
36. WOMAN: He's suspected by the U. S. Government?
37. BROWN: Indeed he is, Mrs. Jones. And later on they examine him specially close, because like as not he won't be healthy. But my point is that this inspection job begins right out in the yards.
38. WOMAN: I wonder if they find many unhealthy ones...
39. BROWN: Say you'd be surprised. Very few nowadays. Almost none at all!
40. WOMAN: Is that so?
41. BROWN: Yep! You see there used to be a lot of TB in cattle. Got so bad that the Department of Agriculture, about twenty-five years ago, set about to wipe it out in this country.
42. WOMAN: How'd they do that?
43. BROWN: They just simply had every single cow and bull and steer in the U.S.A. tested for it. And today, it's practically eliminated.
44. WOMAN: Well...for goodness sake.
45. BROWN: And that's not all, you know. The hogs are a lot healthier too, because they can't catch anything from healthy cattle.
46. WOMAN: Say now that's just fine.
47. BROWN: Well you know there are a lot of these inspectors, depending on the size of the plant. A certain number of them have to be veterinarians...have to hold a degree of "Doctor of Veterinary Medicine", from a recognized college.
48. WOMAN: Real doctors, eh?
49. BROWN: Sure, everybody calls 'em Doc around the meat plant.



50. WOMAN: And they're the ones who put the purple stamp on the chops and so on?
51. BROWN: Well it's like this. (I've been around some of these meat packing plants and I have a general idea.) These Doc's examine every little part of the meat that goes through the <sup>it</sup> plant. Not just the once-over, but they look at/all...and nothing escapes them. Each man inspects hundreds of animals every day. And every piece of meat that goes through has to be examined by four inspectors.
52. WOMAN: Well, I had no idea...
53. BROWN: Now some of these men stand at an assembly line...like a factory you know, and moving along that line...and moving fast too...come all the pieces of meat...liver, kidneys, heart...hams, shoulders, chops...everything. The inspectors pick 'em up, look them over...toss out anything that doesn't look just perfect.
54. WOMAN: Dear me.
55. BROWN: And the meat that reaches the end of that line is absolutely pure and good. At the end of the line stands somebody... probably a girl, with the purple stamp. And she puts that familiar seal on every...what you call "market-cut" of meat. And here it is, see...on this steak.
56. WOMAN: Well I had no idea all that work and fuss went on before that seal could be stamped on. What is it...purple ink?
57. BROWN: Now you know better than that, Mrs. Jones. That's vegetable dye and perfectly edible.
58. WOMAN: I was just teasing, Mr. Brown.
59. BROWN: Women...women...the questions they ask.

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60. WOMAN: Well, would you mind answering this one?
61. BROWN: What's that?
62. WOMAN: What happens to the meat that the inspectors toss aside?
63. BROWN: Oh that...well, that's called condemned meat. And they're mighty particular about that. The condemned meat is numbered and tagged, and a record is made of it. Then it's sent to another building and put in a tank. And its sealed up tight.
64. WOMAN: Why do they seal it?
65. BROWN: So there won't be any chance for it to get in with meat that's sold on the market.
66. WOMAN: Isn't it ever used?
67. BROWN: Oh yes, some of it's made into fertilizer...and it's used for industrial grease.
68. WOMAN: Same sort of thing our kitchen fats go into?
69. BROWN: Yes. And that reminds me, Mrs. Jones. You aren't so good about bringing in your used fats any more. You know they're still needed.
70. WOMAN: Yes...I'll get back in the habit, all right. I'm just having a fling.
71. BROWN: Well get your fling over with Mrs. Jones, because they really want that kitchen fat in industry.
72. WOMAN: Very well, Mr. Brown. Is there any more to your story?
73. BROWN: Yes. Before you ask it, let me tell you. Not all of the meat in the country is Federally Inspected.
74. WOMAN: Why I thought sure it all was.
75. BROWN: Lots of people make that mistake. Only the meat that goes in interstate commerce...in other words, crosses state lines, has to be inspected by the U. S. Government. And the meat the Government buys, of course...and that includes the meat that goes overseas.



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76. WOMAN: It has to be inspected by law?
77. BROWN: Yes. But of course, a lot more meat than is required is Federally inspected. Altogether it amounts to about two thirds of all the meat in the country.
78. WOMAN: I see...
79. BROWN: Then, of course, there are state and city inspections in some places...and these are often modeled around the Federal inspection system.
80. WOMAN: I can see it really pays to look for the inspection seal. I just sort of took it for granted all this time.
81. BROWN: You should look for it...because it's an absolute guarantee of healthful wholesome meat. But our story isn't finished yet, Mrs. Jones.
82. WOMAN: You mean there's more to it than that...?
83. BROWN: Well...listen to this. These Federal inspectors not only look at the meat...but they have to see that the packing plant is immaculate. That's what they consider next most important to seeing that the meat is healthful.
84. WOMAN: That couldn't be so easy.
85. BROWN: It's not. For instance...they have to go all over the plant constantly, looking at the machinery, picking up tools and utensils...inspecting them carefully to see that they're clean.
86. WOMAN: My goodness...
87. BROWN: And first thing in the morning, before work starts...the inspectors have to go through the plant, looking at the floors and walls and ceiling pipes and machinery...and if something isn't shining bright and clean...they put a tag on it saying "U.S. Rejected."

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88. WOMAN: What does that do?
89. BROWN: Well, no work can be done in that room until it's cleaned up!
90. WOMAN: And all that goes on before my meat can have the purple stamp.
91. BROWN: Sure. And listen...in the big room where people are cutting up chops and steaks and trimming bacon...if one piece of bacon, or one chop falls on the floor, it's immediately tagged "U.S. Condemed"...and is sent over to the big separate building for condemned meat.
92. WOMAN: But dear me, every now and then I let a piece of meat fall in my own kitchen...I don't throw it away.
93. BROWN: I daresay these inspectors are even more careful than you are, Mrs. Jones.
94. WOMAN: Well, I never.
95. BROWN: So these fellows are on the job with their hawk eyes through every stage of processing the meat...and they don't stop until the meat is all wrapped up and stamped and on the way out. They're even responsible for the labels...labels on cans and boxes...like this box of hot dogs, for instance...
96. WOMAN: Let's see...
97. BROWN: Look at this label...it doesn't say anything sensational like the "best sausages in the world", nor any of that bragging. Simply tells...here:...what it is...how much it weighs...what's in it...and here's the U.S. Inspected seal.
98. WOMAN: Oh yes...
99. BROWN: Well, this box label has to conform to regulations, and that's part of the inspectors job. Then of course, they've got another responsibility....



100. WOMAN: What's that?

101. BROWN: They've got to keep a constant check on the quality and quantity of the ingredients that go into meat products, like sausage meat, for instance,...and they have to see that the sausage smokers and ham smokers are at the proper temperature.

102. WOMAN: Well I guess I'm impressed, Mr. Brown.

103. BROWN: I think you should be, Mrs. Jones.

104. WOMAN: And I see some customers coming, so I'd better just take my bundle and be off...I'll have plenty to tell my husband tonight, too...I'm sure he doesn't know about all this you've told me.

105. BROWN: Not so hasty, Mrs. Jones. You got me started...and there's just a couple of other things you ought to know.

106. WOMAN: I can't keep it all in my head as it is.

107. BROWN: No, but this has to do with grading...you know, the difference between the inspector's seal, and the grading mark, I was going to tell you a little more...

108. WOMAN: Very well...if you have time, I'm sure I have...

109. BROWN: See here...this is the steak we were looking at...had "U.S. Good" stamped on it, all down the back.

110. WOMAN: Yes...

111. BROWN: Well, as I said, there are four quality grades that you're concerned with. And incidentally...all meat in the country is graded now. That was done because the number of ration points needed were determined by the grade of the meat. And as long as there are ceiling prices on meat, grading will be compulsory.

112. WOMAN: Now you said that the first grade was Choice, didn't you?



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113. BROWN: Yes, that's a very high quality...threaded with fat...and if you're talking about beef, ideal for steaks and roasts. The next grade is marked "U.S. Good", and that's very good quality for all uses. A little fat is mixed in with the lean. You'll find much more of that grade than of Choice.
114. WOMAN: And the third one...
115. BROWN: That's marked "U.S. Commercial". That's very satisfactory for potroasts, etc...and even though it's third in line, it's really quite good quality. The fourth grade is "U.S. Utility". Remember, that wasn't ever rationed.
116. WOMAN: Yes, I know...
117. BROWN: Well it's a good buy, any way you look at it. It's low priced and it's just as nourishing...just as delicious when it's prepared right. It'll make you a good potroast, a stew, and many other inexpensive dishes.
118. WOMAN: So...the grade means I'll get a uniform quality in the meat I buy...
119. BROWN: And the Inspection seal means that the meat you buy is healthful and good, and prepared under sanitary conditions. Believe me, Mrs. Jones, I'm always proud to show that purple seal.
- PAUSE:
120. FREYMAN: Well, Johnny...I'm very glad to get this all straight... about meat inspection and meat grading...
121. JOHN: The thing that astonishes me is...the terrific job there is to meat inspection. I had no idea that so much went on behind that stamp, Mrs. Freyman.



122. FREYMAN: Well you can imagine what it was during the war, Johnny. All the millions of pounds of meat the Armed Forces took... had to be inspected before the Army would accept it. That meant a lot more inspectors, in a lot more plants. But even so...there was always on hand enough Federally inspected meat to meet Army requirements.
123. JOHN: And now I think we ought to say just a little, in closing, about how meat inspection got started in the United States.
124. FREYMAN: Yes...it was back in 1800, wasn't it Johnny...nearly a century and a half ago...that the first Federal meat inspection law was passed?
125. JOHN: Yes...and it was done so that the meat industry could expand its markets, both here and overseas.
126. FREYMAN: And then there was so much public acclaim over it, that the law was improved and amended, so that today our Federal meat inspection service is recognized as the finest in the world.
127. JOHN: And that, CONSUMER TIME friends, is the story of what's behind the little round seal on your meat..."U.S. Inspected and Passed by the Department of Agriculture".
128. FREYMAN: Next week, we're going to hear about your home tomorrow...
129. JOHN: What's new in houses...and furniture...and household equipment  
all  
...and well just/about your modern home!
130. FREYMAN: So be with us then...for another edition of...
131. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...
132. JOHN: CONSUMER TIME!
133. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...CLOSE DRAWER.



134. ANNCR:

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